Effective Homework Time—Training Plan

Use this Training to Go training plan with the Power Point to lead a staff training. Customize it to fit you, the time and setting, and the participants. Break it into shorter parts, delete or add sections, change the activities, or expand on topics. All handouts referenced are available here. If participants don't know each other, you may want to add a warm-up or icebreaker, or go around with introductions.

TRAINING TO GO
Training Plan
Effective Homework Time

Time: 55 minutes	**Materials:**
Prep: • Print handouts for all participants • Cut up the *Student Grouping Cards* • Sticky notes or small squares to use with Odds or Evens • Arrange the space for group and pair work	 • Homework Contract and Log • A+ Math Worksheet • Odds or Evens • Student Grouping Cards

Slide Number and Title	Timing	Notes and Talking Points
1. Effective Homework Time	1 min	**Explain:** Homework time in afterschool doesn't need to look or feel like study hall. Think of it more like a living room with groups of kids from different classes working together, with a helpful parent around. Homework is a fact of schooling. A lot of learning can happen during homework time beyond just doing assignments, with a lot less struggle.
2. Objectives	1 min	**Explain:** Homework time is a part of our program. Youth need to turn in homework to do well in school, and parents need the support of getting at least some homework addressed in afterschool. But it can be a struggle. So today's session focuses on making homework time more effective for everyone by creating a homework component that builds learning and thinking skills while also designing an engaging environment that will keep youth coming back.

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Effective Homework Time—Training Plan

3. Homework	3 min	**Ask and Discuss:** • What comes to mind when you see or hear the word "homework"? • Why were so many of your responses negative? **Explain:** Most of our perceptions about homework are based on our experiences as students and/or parents and, unfortunately, many of those experiences may have been negative. So we need to expand our view of homework time both for us as staff as well as for our program's youth.
4. Rethinking Homework	5 min	**Explain:** Homework time in afterschool doesn't have to just be about getting the school day assignments done. We can use the time to develop important academic skills as well as those other skills that youth need to succeed in life like independent learning, responsibility, and leadership. **Ask:** What are the assets of afterschool that can support rethinking and reconfiguring homework time? After participants answer click in the answers. **Ask:** What are skills for success in school and life that afterschool can support? After participants answer click in the answers.

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5. Homework Tools	15 min	**Explain:** To focus on building these types of skills, we need to use tools and systems that can help us, as staff, and youth deliberately address these areas and look for ways to structure homework time to improve them.
		Activity:
		Distribute: The *Homework Contract and Log* - Have small groups decide on one or two of the five different pages to explore in more detail - As they examine the different sections have them discuss the following: - What would this tool help with? How can it help youth? How can it help staff? - Would you use it? - What are potential problems? - What would we do with the forms when completed? - Have groups report out
6. Keeping Homework Time Engaging	2 min	**Explain:** We want and need to create an atmosphere that encourages youth to do homework when they have it because it's important to complete it, but also create an engaging setting for them when they don't have homework or finish early. Engaging homework environments have:
		- Transition activities for when youth are coming into or leaving the program so that no time is wasted and youth are too engaged to be disruptive - Social aspects in that youth, to some degree, should be allowed to talk, move around, and collaborate - Activities for when some youth finish an assignment or activity early so that they continue to learn and don't disturb other youth who are still working

Effective Homework Time—Training Plan

7. Effective Homework Time: Offering Choice	8 min	**Activity:**
		 • Distribute the *A+ Math Worksheet* and *Odds or Evens*
		 • Explain that individuals should complete both handouts - the *A+ Math Worksheet* individually and *Odds or Evens* with a partner
		 • After participants complete the handouts, ask the following questions:
		   o Who did the math worksheet first? Why? What did you do when you finished it? What skills did it support?
		   o Who did the *Odds or Evens* first? Why? What did you do when you finished it? What skills did it support?
		   o Which do you think youth would like better?
		
		 Explain: Both handouts support addition skills,
		   o But *Odds and Evens* also builds critical thinking, problem solving, social, verbal communication, and planning skills.
		   o And it is more engaging, something kids can play for a longer period of time (once you finish the worksheet you're done) and kids can use the same cards to make up their own games.
		   o And there is minimal prep time involved. The directions can be used over and over again and the cards were made by the students. (unlike ditto worksheets you have to keep reprinting).

8. Grouping	5 min	**Explain:** Grouping not only helps youth learn how to work together more effectively, it also helps you all have more time with the students who need you most making for a more effective homework time overall. **Ask:** What challenges do you anticipate if grouping becomes a bigger part of the program? How can those be addressed? Make sure to mention things like youth cheating, not getting along, and them taking a lot of time to set up. For solutions, make sure to mention the importance of establishing group norms and teaching procedures for getting help when working in groups.

Effective Homework Time—Training Plan

9. Grouping Sort	10 min	**Explain:** There are lots of ways to group youth. They can choose their own, which has some advantages and may work well. Or you can organize groups for particular reasons, grouping by assignments or class, or grouping a few more advanced students with some needing support in the particular subject area. **Activity:** • Divide into pairs • Give each group a set of the *Student Grouping Cards* • Form homework groups with the youth on the cards. Use any criteria that make sense. • Compare groupings. Ask pairs with different groupings to explain their reasoning.
10. Closing and Next Steps	5 min	**Explain:** Effective homework time takes creating an engaging environment, utilizing homework tools and systems, and trying new methods such as grouping. **Ask:** From what you learned in today's training, what will you implement or try out first? What steps do you need to take to make it happen?

Thank everyone for participating, and move on to next steps!